

VA Stars & Stripes Healthcare Network

2004 Annual Report



Serving those who served

Dear Friends of the VA Stars & Stripes Healthcare Network:

On behalf of the employees of the VA Stars & Stripes Healthcare Network (VISN 4), I am pleased to provide you a copy of our FY 2004 Annual Report. This report provides an overview of our network's performance for the fiscal year beginning October 1, 2003 through September 30, 2004. It also spotlights some of our many accomplishments.

During FY 2004, nearly 296,000 patients were treated by facilities within the VA Stars & Stripes Healthcare Network. That was 11,000 more than last year, and almost 54,000 more than were treated just three years ago! We did this while continuing to improve our patient satisfaction scores, which remain higher than VA's national average. In fact, results from VA's patient satisfaction survey showed that over 85% of the veterans in our network said they were able to get an appointment with their VA provider when they wanted one-- putting us in the "exceptional" category for this element of the survey.

Along with our team of hard-working, dedicated employees, there were many others who contributed to the network's achievements in FY 2004. This includes nearly 7,000 regularly scheduled volunteers and more than 30,000 other, occasional volunteers. These volunteers spent almost 700,000 hours helping our veterans and staff.

Another significant factor in VISN 4's success and progress was the solid support we received from the many veterans' advocates and organizations in our network.

I look forward to working with all of you in FY 2005 as we once again commit ourselves to "serving those who served."

Charleen R. Szabo, FACHE
Network Director

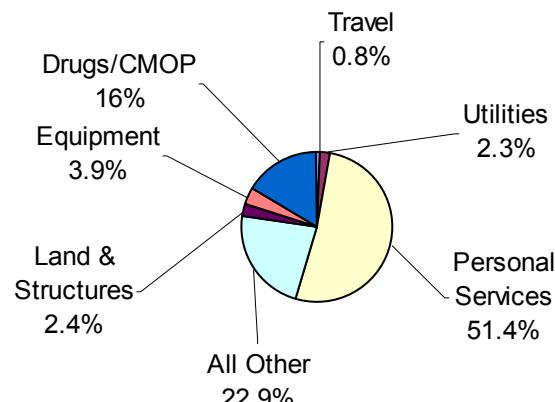
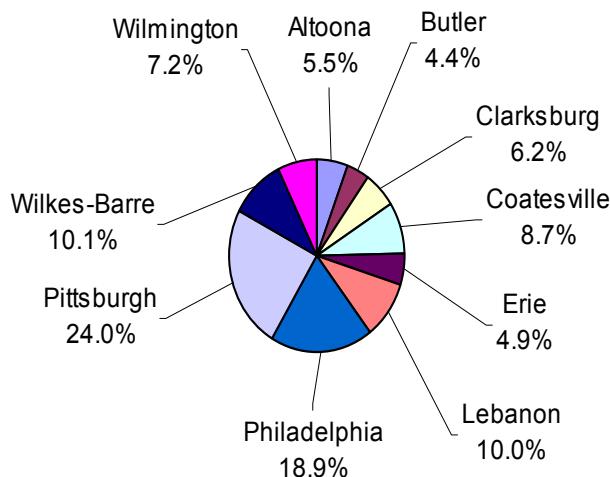
Workload & Financial Report

	FY 2002	FY 2003	FY 2004
Unique Patients	270,627	284,441	295,842
Costs/Patient¹	\$4,000	\$4,122	\$4,297
Outpatient Visits	2,223,676	2,325,419	2,516,045
Pharmacy Costs	\$206,902,118	\$224,189,220	\$251,786,391
Pharmacy Costs/Patient	\$764	\$788	\$851
MCCR Collections²	\$67,991,765	\$84,239,931	\$95,920,151
Prosthetics Funding	\$38,671,400	\$44,151,000	\$50,404,500
Indirect to Total Costs	21%	20%	20%

1. Excludes costs for capital spending. 2. **MCCR:** Medical Care Cost Recovery

FY 2004 Medical Care Obligations - \$1,387,310,000

(Note: Obligations are funds committed on the date an order is placed to pay for supplies or services to be received.)



Health Care and Customer Service Improvements

Seamless Transition/Returning Service Members: The Department of Veterans Affairs and Department of Defense are working together to transfer the health care of returning service members seamlessly from military treatment facilities to VA health care facilities. Through FY 2004, the network had treated 1,413 returning service members. There is a point-of-contact at each medical center to assist the returning service members. The contacts are listed on the network Web site, at www.starsandstripes.med.va.gov

As Reservists and members of the National Guard, 91 of our employees have deployed-- or are still deployed-- in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, or operations in Kosovo and Bosnia.

Care Coordination Program: Care Coordination is intended to help veterans with high-risk, chronic diseases avoid the complications that may lead to hospitalizations or long-term care. In FY 2004, the network received \$1 million in funding to purchase equipment for implementation of the program. In addition, all medical centers developed plans to rollout Care Coordination based on the needs of their patient population.

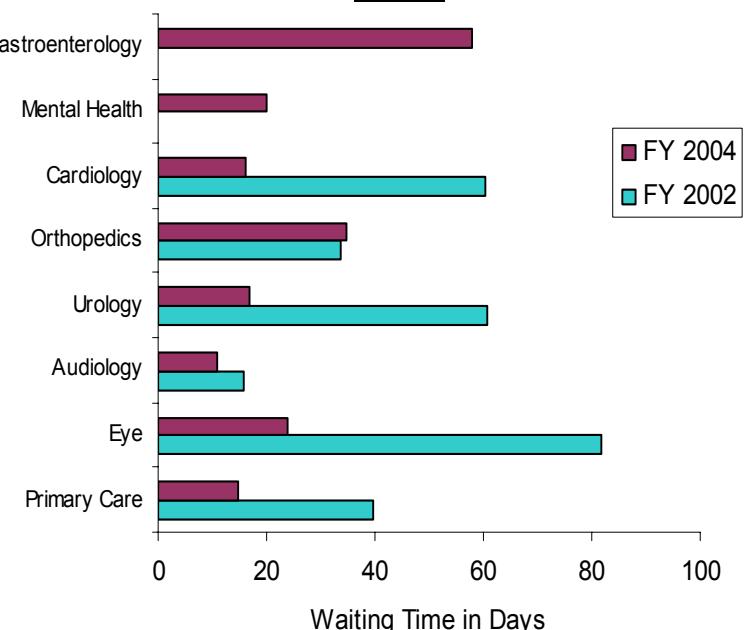
Quality

2004 Patient Satisfaction Survey

	National	VISN 4
Inpatient Overall Quality (Very good, Excellent)	74	77
Outpatient Satisfaction (Very/Completely Satisfied)	75	80
Provider Wait Time (20 minutes or less)	70	78
Appointment when wanted (Established Patient)	83	90
Appointment when wanted (New Patient)	80	86

VISN 4 was above the national average and the **best VISN** when patients were asked: "All things considered, how satisfied are you with your health care in VA?"

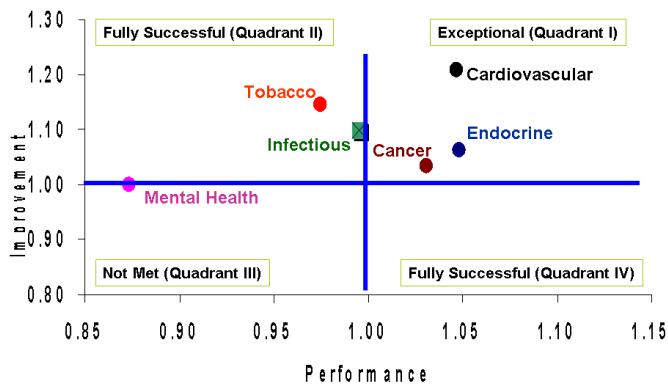
Access



In FY 2004 VISN 4 continued to make progress on waiting times: 6 of 8 key clinics were below the 30-day criterion, with orthopedics at 34.8 days, and GI at 58 days.

Performance Measures: Clinical Interventions

FY 2004 VISN 4 Quadrant Analysis



VISN 4 achieved the “exceptional” performance level in 3 of 5 clinical interventions (i.e., cancer, cardiovascular disease, and diabetes), and a “fully successful” level for two others (infectious disease and tobacco use). New measures related to mental health were introduced this year, and we have focused our efforts on improving treatment and follow-up for major depressive disorders and substance use.

Quality Achievement Grant: VISN 4 again received a Kenneth W. Kizer Grant for our commitment to the Malcolm W. Baldrige National Quality Program's health care criteria for performance excellence. This grant, provided by the Veterans Health Administration (VHA), recognized our continued use of a systematic approach to improve patient care, achieve exemplary health care outcomes, attain a high level of patient satisfaction, and identify excellent practices that can be shared with other VHA health care networks.

Updates

Research: Our network received \$42,462,013 for research, and \$17,899,644 for research support in FY 2004. There are currently 158 clinical investigators involved in nearly 500 active research projects. Their research focuses on a variety of topics that concern both veterans and the general public.

Information Technology (IT): During FY 2004 all sites installed the Caché™ database system. This system allows staff to access the electronic medical record in a faster, more efficient manner. The sites also began working with the Care Management Information System (CMIS), which integrates information from a variety of sources and makes it easily accessible to the end user at the VISN and medical center level. CMIS will enable Care Coordination staff to easily identify high-risk patients for enrollment and monitor patient status.

Organizational Information

VA Stars & Stripes Healthcare Network (VISN 4) is part of the Veterans Health Administration and one of 21 Veterans Integrated Service Networks (VISNs) that comprise the largest, fully-integrated health care system in the United States.

Our **mission** is to maintain and improve the health and well-being of veterans through excellence in health care, social services, education, and research. Our **vision** is to be recognized as a world-class health care system. Our **values** are trust, respect, excellence, commitment, compassion, and responsibility.

VISN 4's service area includes 104 counties in the states of Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Delaware, New Jersey, Ohio, and New York. The network is comprised of 10 medical centers, 10 long-term care facilities, 3 domiciliaries, over 40 community-based outpatient clinics (CBOCs), and 5 major research centers. An estimated 1.5 million veterans live in the defined service area of VISN 4. In FY 2004, approximately 18% of the veterans living within the network received services from VISN facilities.

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